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ABSTRACT

A study explored how students' writing apprehension and self-efficacy beliefs affect their use of teacher comments on first drafts of stories. The driving force behind the study stemmed from an interest in how to provide more effective, relevant feedback to students. The study examined student use of global and local feedback--global feedback is comment on a written composition's content, while local feedback is comment on mechanical writing issues. R. Straub's 1997 questionnaire was modified to reflect the type of writing mass communication students do--journalistic writing. A short news story was used with 10 teacher comments written on it--5 dealt with global issues and 5 dealt with local issues. Writing apprehension was measured by the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (1975), and writing self efficacy was measured by 3 instruments developed by Shell et al. (1989). The questionnaire was completed by 181 university students in the Rocky Mountain region. Statistical tests for differences between low and high students in self-efficacy, writing apprehension, and writing outcomes expectations seem to provide evidence that some students use global or local instructor feedback more than do others. The effect sizes indicate that the degree of those differences was small. However, the effect sizes are due to the lack of variability in the scores on the feedback instrument. The causal-comparative research design would not permit with any confidence the statement that self efficacy, outcomes expectations, or writing apprehension cause student use of different types of feedback. (Contains 2 tables and 34 references.) (NKA)

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Running head: USE OF COMMENTS

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THE EFFECTS OF MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY ON STUDENTS' USE OF INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS

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Introduction

Most writing researchers agree that providing feedback to students is an effective way to improve writing from grade school to college. However, when reading instructors' comments on their stories, students are faced with interpreting what the notations mean and how they should use the suggestions to revise stories. Written comments also concern their teachers, who spend hours providing detailed feedback on both writing quality and content in hopes that students will improve their subsequent drafts.

Many journalism students use their teachers' feedback to polish and refine second drafts of their articles. Some students ignore their teachers' feedback, while others simply refuse to use the comments during the revision process. Still more may be confused and not understand the feedback. Overeager students may misinterpret the comments and make new errors on second drafts.

Instructors find that constructive criticism can increase some students' self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to write and motivate them to work harder and improve their writing. However, the same comments that were intended to be constructive can cause other students to dislike writing and to give up trying to improve subsequent drafts. Those students may even develop writing apprehension as a result of feedback. Writing apprehension seems to be more common in poor writers than in skilled writers, although it is possible that poor writing skills may lead to writing apprehension. Furthermore, writing apprehension can begin at a young age and become a lifelong problem.

Journalism teachers who are aware of students suffering from writing apprehension or students with high self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to write may be able to provide more effective feedback. Since many journalism teachers provide

extensive feedback on both the writing mechanics and content of their students' stories, it would benefit instructors to understand the effects their comments can have on students' emotions, especially writing apprehension and writing self-efficacy.

Considering the close scrutiny that journalism instructors give to their students' stories, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to the relationships between feedback and students' writing characteristics. The purpose of this study was to explore how students' writing apprehension and self-efficacy beliefs affect their use of teacher comments on first drafts of stories. The driving force behind the study stemmed from an interest in how to provide more effective, relevant feedback to students. This research investigated the claims of previous studies that students tend to use certain types of feedback and ignore others when revising rough drafts. However, this study considered feedback use in light of individuals' writing apprehension and self-efficacy beliefs.

The following research question was considered: What are the effects of writing apprehension, writing outcomes expectations, and writing self-efficacy beliefs on students' use of feedback from instructors on first drafts?

Hypotheses

This study will examine student use of global and local feedback. Straub and Lunsford (1995) categorized global feedback as comment upon a written composition's content, such as the ideas, development and organization. Local feedback is a comment on mechanical writing issues. Straub's (1997) study of 147 freshman writing students indicated that students preferred comments on both local and global matters.

Daly (1977) found that people with high levels of writing apprehension tend to be poor writers compared to people with moderate or low levels. Furthermore, according to

Daly, poor writers often have a history of receiving negative feedback on their writings. Flower and Hayes (1981) noted that poor writers may concentrate more on spelling or other mechanical tasks than on the content of their compositions. In a case study of a high-apprehensive writer, Selfe (1985) also observed that she seemed more concerned with avoiding mechanical errors than with the thematic soundness of her composition. Therefore, it seems likely that apprehensive writers will concentrate on instructor comments dealing with local errors and ignore global feedback.

McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985) found a strong relationship between high self-efficacy beliefs in one's writing abilities and writing performance. The researchers also noted that self-efficacy is partly a result of feedback students have received about the quality of their writing. If high self-efficacy writers also tend to be good writers, they may have transferred knowledge about writing mechanics into long-term memory, freeing themselves to deal more with content and structural matters in their writing assignments, according to Flower and Hayes (1981). They may, therefore, find instructor comments on global issues to be more useful than do low self-efficacy writers.

Researchers (Daly & Wilson, 1983; Onwuegbuzie, 1999; Pajares & Johnson, 1993) have found negative relationships between writing apprehension and various self-esteem constructs, including self-efficacy. Based upon those findings, it seems reasonable to expect that low self-efficacy writers will also report they use local comments, while low writing apprehension writers will report they use global feedback.

An individual's expectations of how writing can help them accomplish their goals, both intrinsic and extrinsic, also may play a role in how they process instructor feedback. Vroom (1970) stated that people who expect to receive rewards, or outcomes,

as a result of their efforts will be motivated to expend more effort on the task at hand. People who do not expect much reward from their efforts will lack motivation and not try hard. For writing students, those rewards could include grades, praise, and good jobs. Journalism students, in particular, should have high outcomes expectations because many have goals of working in the mass media after graduation. It seems that students with high writing outcomes expectations will report they use global comments from the instructors in efforts to improve their second drafts, while students with lower expectations will report they use local comments more often in their revisions.

Based upon the literature, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. Students with high levels of writing apprehension will report they use instructor feedback on local issues when revising a first draft more than students with low levels of writing apprehension do.
2. Students with low writing apprehension will report they use feedback on global matters when they revise a rough draft more than students with high writing apprehension do.
3. Students with high self-efficacy beliefs will report they use instructor comments on global issues in their revisions more than students with low self-efficacy beliefs do.
4. Students with low self-efficacy beliefs will report they use comments on local matters when revising first drafts more than students with high self-efficacy beliefs do.
5. Students with high writing outcomes expectations will report they use comments on global matters when revising first drafts more than students with low writing outcomes expectations do.

6. Students with low writing outcomes expectations will report they use comments on local matters when revising first drafts more than students with low writing outcomes expectations do.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing researchers frequently mention the amounts of time instructors spend on student papers providing comments that are either ignored or not used in revised drafts. Instructors become further frustrated when students simply delete problematic passages rather than rewrite them, despite the instructor's suggestions for revision (Ziv, 1982).

Although one of the tenets of the 1990s' writing-across-the-curriculum movement is that writing is improved by the opportunity to get feedback on a first draft before turning in a paper for a grade, students can become "overloaded" with instructors' feedback, causing them to ignore some comments (McKeachie, 1999, p. 138). Furthermore, Dohrer (1991) found that students often misunderstand teachers' intentions in written comments. Students revised papers mainly to get higher grades by meeting what they perceived to be the expectations of their teachers, based upon written comments. He concluded that many students were not confident in their abilities to revise papers; in other words, they had low writing self-efficacy beliefs.

Instructor feedback also can have a powerful effect on students' emotions, especially writing apprehension, motivation, and their beliefs about writing and their own skills as writers (McLeod, 1987). The literature generally agrees that instructor feedback can inspire and motivate students to work harder on improving their writing. According to Bandura (1986), a person's confidence in his or her ability to perform a task, or self-efficacy belief, plays a large role in motivation. Bandura, as well as Shell, Murphy, and

Bruning (1989), and Pajares and Johnson (1993) argued that self-efficacy is task- and context-specific; for example, a person may have high self-efficacy beliefs in math but not in writing. Writing self-efficacy consists of three components -- writing skills, tasks and outcomes expectations, according to Shell et al. (1989). Writing skills self-efficacy beliefs are students' confidence in their ability to successfully perform certain writing mechanics, such as spelling and punctuation. Writing task self-efficacy beliefs are students' confidence in their ability to successfully complete specific writing problems, such as a job resume. Writing outcomes expectations are how students rate the importance of writing for achieving various life goals, such as getting a job.

Writing apprehension is a construct that attempts to differentiate people who find writing enjoyable and those who experience high levels of apprehension when writing is required (Daly & Miller, 1975). Relating the construct to feedback, Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981, p. 16) defined writing apprehension as "a construct associated with a person's tendencies to approach or avoid situations that require writing accompanied by some amount of evaluation." Writing apprehension may be so severe for some students that they ignore an instructor's feedback because of a history of failure on writing assignments (Daly, 1978). Instructor comments may not only cause apprehension in students, but may paralyze their efforts to improve their writing in the future. Lackey, Miller and Flanigan (1997) stated that feedback can motivate students to improve writing performance, but that much written feedback lowers motivation instead.

How students react to feedback is a particular concern in journalism classes because instructors tend to note every mechanical and content error. "Poorly written and badly organized stories deter readers from gaining information that may be essential to

their well-being" (Fox, 1993, p. vii). As a result, many journalism students may be overwhelmed by instructor feedback. In particular, a weak writer who needs the most help but whose papers receive the most teacher comments may view the graded paper as a "messy autopsy" with the instructor as "coroner" (Grant-Davie & Shapiro, 1987, p. 6), and the student may even develop writing apprehension.

Most studies on writing apprehension and self-efficacy have come from the English composition field. But composition classes differ from journalism classes in terms of audience. Much composition writing is private, such as keeping journals, while journalism writing is intended for a mass audience. Composition students commonly write essays in which they express their ideas, while journalism students write stories based upon facts (Riffe & Stacks, 1988, 1992). As a product for public consumption, with many critical and alert readers, journalism students' stories not only must be factually correct and complete, but well written. "A good journalist gets the mechanics right because that is what the audience understands" (Berner, 1992, p.2).

Pitts (1989) noted that journalism students usually write for their teacher as the audience. Students tend to look for mechanical errors rather than clarity of meaning. Pitts urged teaching methods that incorporate more interaction between the instructor and students during the writing process. Some research has focused upon the importance of establishing a two-way dialogue about writing between students and teachers (Fey, 1993; Ziv, 1984) so teachers don't take control of the student's writing through feedback.

Flower (1994) examined how affect, including self-image, emotion, motivation and attitudes, influences student writing. Reflecting the powerful role that affect plays, some students described their writing processes as "dilemma-driven action" (p. 243)

rather than problem-solving strategies. Students also reported having little or no sense of control of these feelings, and attributed their success or failure at writing to external factors, such as luck or time.

A study based upon Bandura's (1986) self-efficacy theory of motivation found that students will benefit from written teacher feedback when they perceive that acting upon the comments will improve their ability or improve their performance (Lackey et al., 1997). Receiving feedback about the quality of their writing helps students develop their writing self-efficacy (McCarthy et al., 1985).

Daly and Wilson (1983) suggested that evaluation, which is a form of feedback, plays a part in forming a person's self-esteem, and that a history of positive evaluations will generally lead to higher self-esteem. Conversely, a history of poor evaluations could result in negative feelings toward oneself. However, Pajares and Johnson (1993) found the writing apprehension levels of the students did not change even though their performance and sense of self-efficacy improved.

Psychologists have noted that a moderate level of anxiety "can be beneficial to learning" (Sogunro, 1998, p. 110) because it increases motivation, heightens alertness and concentration, and thereby improves performance. However, other students can be crippled by higher levels, and their academic performances may suffer as a result.

Bandura (1986) contended that the expected outcomes of an action depend largely on a person's judgment of his or her self-efficacy. In other words, perceived rewards or punishments result from how competent people believe themselves to be in performing an act. If students believe they are capable of covering a news event, they probably expect the outcome will be praise from the instructor and a high grade. Students who

doubt their ability to cover the event likely expect lesser rewards or even penalties. Doubtful students may not try as hard to interview people or take notes at the event.

Research has indicated that self-efficacy beliefs may better predict writing performance than do outcomes expectations. Factor analysis by Shell et al. (1989) found that while self-efficacy was a significant predictor of writing performance ($p < .01$), outcomes expectations were not significant, supporting Bandura's theory. Pajares and Johnson (1993) also found no correlation between students' writing self-efficacy and their outcomes expectations. Students' perceived usefulness of writing was unrelated to their writing confidence.

METHODOLOGY

Student use of instructor feedback was measured by the score on an instrument that asked students to rate their use of local or global teacher comments. The instrument was similar to Straub's 1997 questionnaire, which asked students to rate their preferences for teacher comments written on an essay, but not whether they would use the comments in revision. The Straub instrument was modified for this study to reflect the type of writing mass communication students do -- journalistic writing. A short news story from The Copy Editor's Handbook (Fellow & Clanin, 1998) was used with 10 teacher comments written on it. Five comments dealt with local issues and five involved global matters. A questionnaire with the rating choices on it listed the 10 comments. The four choices to rate each item were worded: 1 - definitely will use, 2 - might use, 3 - probably won't use, and 4 - definitely won't use. The average scores for the five global comment use items and for the five local comment use items were both calculated. Before being used for the study, the instrument was pilot-tested for validity and reliability. In a pilot of

undergraduate journalism students (n = 20), a Cronbach alpha of .76 was calculated for the instrument, which was considered an acceptable degree of reliability. Item analysis revealed that each item score was positively correlated with the total-scale scores. Six items had statistically significant correlations ranging from r = .595 to r = .795. Four were local comments and two were global. Non-significant correlations on the other four items ranged from r = .207 to r = .409. The two items with the lowest correlations (r = .207, r = .224) were rephrased before the instrument was used in the study.

Writing apprehension was measured by the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975), which has been found to be valid and reliable in numerous studies. Scores on the 26-item instrument may range from a low of 26 to a high of 130 with high scores indicating low levels of writing apprehension. Students scoring above the mean were placed in the low writing apprehension group, while students scoring below the mean were placed in the high writing apprehension group.

Writing self-efficacy was measured by three instruments developed by Shell et al. (1989) to measure writing skills self-efficacy, writing tasks self-efficacy and writing outcomes expectations. The instruments have been found to be valid and reliable in other studies. The 8-item writing skills and 20-item writing tasks instruments allow participants to choose a score from 0 (no chance) to 100 (completely certain) to rate their self-efficacy. Scores were then averaged. The writing outcomes expectations instrument used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from extremely unimportant to extremely important. Scores were calculated by averaging the ratings across all 20 items. High scores indicated high self-efficacy beliefs and writing outcomes expectations. Students scoring above the means were placed in the high self-efficacy beliefs and high writing outcomes

expectations groups. Students scoring below the means were placed in low self-efficacy and low writing outcomes groups.

RESULTS

Description of the Sample

The instruments and a demographic questionnaire were completed by 181 students attending a 12,000-enrollment university in the Rocky Mountain region in May, 2000. The sample consisted of 104 females and 77 males enrolled in six mass media courses offered by the communication and mass media department. Seven surveys had one incomplete item in the instruments. In those cases, the average score for that item was used. The mean age was 21.1 years old (SD = 3.62) with ages ranging from 18 to 57. Caucasians composed the largest ethnic group, 92.3 percent, in the study (n = 167).

The majority of students in the study, 52.5 percent, were majoring in the communication and mass media department (n = 95), with 58 listing communication, 27 journalism and 10 broadcasting as their majors. The remaining 47.5 percent (n = 86) majored in other academic areas or were undeclared. Participating in the study were 39 freshmen or 21.5 percent of the sample, 48 sophomores or 26.5 percent, 49 juniors or 27.1 percent, and 45 seniors or 24.9 percent. Only 25.4 percent (n = 46) had taken just one of the three required writing courses at the university, while 88 had taken two and 40 had taken three. Seven participants did not respond to the question.

The mean grade point average in the required freshman composition course was 3.33 (SD = .68). More than 84 percent of the students (n = 153) reported they received a final grade of A or B. Only 19 students or 10.5 percent reported a C grade, and one student said he or she received a D. Eight respondents did not report a grade.

Mean Scores for Writing Apprehension, Writing Skills and Tasks Self-efficacy, and Writing Outcomes Expectations

The mean score on the 100-point writing tasks self-efficacy subscale was 75.91 (SD = 12.16). Scores ranged from 43 to 100. The mean score on the 100-point writing skills self-efficacy subscale was 87.17 (SD = 11.88). Scores ranged from 32.5 to 100. For further data analysis, the 28 items composing the writing skills and writing tasks self-efficacy subscales were averaged into a single Efficacy score. The mean for the full-scale Efficacy scores was 79.13 (SD = 10.53), and scores ranged from 49.29 to 98.93.

The mean score on the seven-point writing outcomes expectations instrument was 4.90 (SD = 1.04). Scores from 1.65 to 7.00.

The writing apprehension mean score was 96.02 (SD = 16.39) on a possible scale from 26 to 130. Scores ranged from 50 to 130.

Mean scores for local and global feedback use were recoded so high scores indicated that students reported high use of instructor feedback. The global feedback mean score was 3.23 (SD = .46) on a scale from 1.0 to 4.0. Scores ranged from 1.8 to 4.0. The local feedback mean score was 3.53 (SD = .42) on a scale from 1.0 to 4.0. Scores ranged from 2.2 to 4.0.

The Effects of Writing Apprehension, Writing Outcomes Expectations, and Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs on Students' Use of Global or Local Feedback

To test the six hypotheses, Analyses of Variance and Welch's t'-tests were used. The means and standard deviations for the Global and Local Feedback scores were calculated for low and high Efficacy groups, low and high Outcomes groups, and low and high Apprehension groups. (See Table 1). Means for all levels of the independent

variables were between 3.13 and 3.65, indicating that the sample generally responded that it would definitely use or might use both global and local instructor comments when revising first drafts of the news story included in the feedback instrument.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Low and High Efficacy, Outcomes, and Apprehension Levels

	Global Feedback Use					
	Low			High		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Efficacy	3.13	.43	84	3.32	.48	97
Outcomes	3.15	.44	83	3.30	.48	98
Apprehension	3.33	.46	89	3.13	.45	92
	Local Feedback Use					
	Low			High		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Efficacy	3.44	.42	84	3.61	.40	97
Outcomes	3.45	.47	83	3.61	.36	98
Apprehension	3.65	.36	89	3.43	.45	92

The homogeneity of variance was tenable to use ANOVAs to test four of the hypotheses, but it was not tenable to use ANOVA to test the effects of Apprehension on Local feedback use ($p < .05$) or to use ANOVA to test the effects of Outcomes on Local feedback use ($p < .01$). Therefore, the Welch t'-test for unequal n's and heterogenous variances was used to test the statistical hypotheses for Apprehension and Local and for Outcomes and Local with the levels of significance set at a .05 alpha.

To test the remaining four primary hypotheses regarding the differences between students who use local or global feedback, three one-way ANOVAs were computed for each independent variable (Efficacy, Apprehension, and Outcomes) with global feedback use (Global) as the dependent variable. A one-way ANOVA was calculated for Efficacy as the independent variable with local feedback use (Local) as the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 1: In the Welch t'-test, the effect of Apprehension on Local was statistically significant, $t'(179) = 3.675$, $p < .001$, with an effect size of .070. Results indicated that low writing apprehension students ($M = 3.65$) reported they will use local instructor comments more than high writing apprehension students ($M = 3.43$). Therefore, the results did not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: The ANOVA was statistically significant ($p < .01$). Low writing apprehension students ($M = 3.33$) reported they would use global comments significantly more than did high writing apprehension students ($M = 3.13$). The hypothesis was supported. (See Table 2).

Hypothesis 3: The ANOVA was statistically significant ($p < .01$). High self-efficacy students ($M = 3.32$) indicated they would use global feedback significantly more than did low self-efficacy writers ($M = 3.13$), supporting the hypothesis. (See Table 2).

Hypothesis 4: The ANOVA was statistically significant ($p < .01$). The hypothesis was not supported because high self-efficacy students ($M = 3.61$) indicated they would use local feedback significantly more than did low self-efficacy writers ($M = 3.44$). (See Table 2).

Hypothesis 5: The ANOVA was statistically significant ($p < .05$). Writers with high writing outcomes expectations ($M = 3.30$) indicated they would use global feedback significantly more than did students with low writing outcomes expectations ($M = 3.15$). The hypothesis was supported. (See Table 2).

Hypothesis 6: In the Welch t'-test, the effect of Outcomes on Local was statistically significant, $t'(179) = 2.54$, $p < .05$, with an effect size of .036. High outcomes students ($M = 3.61$) reported they will use local instructor comments more than do low outcomes writers ($M = 3.45$). The results did not support the hypothesis.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Global and Local Feedback Use

	Global			Local		
Source	df	MS	F	df	MS	F
Efficacy	1, 179	1.607	7.761**	1, 179	1.325	7.797**
Outcomes	1, 179	.933	4.426*			
Apprehension	1, 179	1.930	9.403**			

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Effect sizes were calculated to describe the magnitude of the differences between the low and high groups for writing apprehension, writing self-efficacy, and writing outcomes expectations. Effect sizes were found to be small. They ranged from a low of .024 for the Outcomes levels on Global Feedback Use to a high of .070 for the Apprehension levels on Local Feedback Use. The effect sizes indicated that the magnitude of the differences between groups in the three factors was small.

DISCUSSION

The statistical tests for differences between low and high students in self-efficacy, writing apprehension and writing outcomes expectations seem to provide evidence that some students use global or local instructor feedback more than do others. The effect sizes indicate that the degree of those differences was small. However, the effect sizes are due to the general lack of variability in the scores on the feedback instrument.

The general direction of the means provides some evidence in support of the hypotheses concerning which students would use global feedback in revising first drafts. These general tendencies were anticipated and hypothesized, based both upon the literature and upon the intuition of the researcher, who teaches journalistic-writing courses. Even though the effect sizes of the differences are small, the researcher still suspects there are differences between students with those characteristics, and the results of this study do not change those suspicions.

However, the researcher did not anticipate the direction of the means between students in low and high efficacy, outcomes and apprehension groups and whether they use local instructor feedback. The hypotheses regarding these relationships were based upon cognitive learning theory and were not supported by the results. These unexpected

results, although not important according to effect sizes, could provide new directions for future inquiries into student use of instructor comments, as well as for practical applications of instructor feedback in classroom settings.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Study

The causal-comparative research design would not permit one to state with any confidence that self-efficacy, outcomes expectations, or writing apprehension cause student use of different types of feedback. For further study, populations of high and low self-efficacy writers, or students with high and low levels of writing apprehension, could be identified. Samples drawn from those populations could be randomly assigned to treatment and control groups to more accurately assess the causes of use of feedback.

The sample for this study may not be representative of the general population of undergraduate mass communication students. The sample seems to have a very low level of writing apprehension ($\underline{M}$ = 96.02) compared to Daly's 1975 sample ($\underline{M}$ = 79.28, $\underline{n}$ = 164). Students in this sample also may be better writers than are other mass communication students. Their mean grade-point-average was 3.33 in freshman composition, which would translate to a B-plus on many campuses. There also was little variability in the grades ($\underline{SD}$ = .68), with only one D reported and no F grades. It is possible that the self-reported GPA may be inflated. Furthermore, grades probably are not the most accurate measure of students' true writing abilities. On the other hand, one might expect mass communication students to have above-average writing skills. Replication of the study with a different sample that is more heterogenous on writing skills and writing apprehension is recommended.

Although the researcher followed recommended procedures to make the feedback instrument valid and reliable, it is possible that the instrument lacks internal consistency, failed to discriminate adequately among different student characteristics, or simply failed to actually measure whether students would use global or local feedback. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient dropped from .76 in the pilot study to .64 in the actual study. Also, student use of local or global feedback may not be measurable by a questionnaire. The feedback instrument requires a longer period of testing, using different samples under different ecological conditions and in different instructional settings.

Implications for Practice

Based upon the findings of this study, the implications for instructional practice include:

- Instructor comments may affect students' writing apprehension and self-efficacy.
- Teachers should include a feedback "reprocessing" stage in their instruction.
- Instructors should consider the political implications of their feedback.
- Identifying writing apprehension could aid students with high levels of apprehension.

High writing apprehension, low writing self-efficacy, and low writing outcomes expectations were detected among some students in this sample. The causes of their attitudes toward writing are unclear. For instance, as some researchers have noted (Daly, 1985; Hillocks, 1986; Selfe, 1985), poor writing skills may cause writing apprehension or writing apprehension could lead to poor writing. A reciprocal relationship could also be true of instructor feedback. Writing apprehension, self-efficacy beliefs, and writing outcomes expectations might cause students to use or not use different types of instructor feedback. However, the literature strongly suggests that instructor's comments, both

written and verbal, can affect writing apprehension and students' self-efficacy beliefs toward writing. All writing teachers should seek a balance between comments that facilitate learning and those that cause damaging affective reactions in students.

This study further demonstrates how little is known about how students actually process instructors' comments when they revise their written products. Most writing instructors openly express frustration over how much effort they put into crafting constructive criticism on student assignments, and how little effort they see students expend on second drafts despite the feedback. Students in this sample generally reported that they definitely would use or might use both focuses of instructor comments to fix mechanical and content problems in their second drafts. But, in practice, writing teachers note how few changes many students make in subsequent drafts despite receiving extensive instructor comments on earlier drafts. This study raises the question of why students say they would use instructor comments to improve second drafts, but in practice, most do not use them. Since the feedback instrument was self-report, it is possible that respondents did not answer honestly. But giving students the benefit of the doubt, what happens between their intent to use feedback to improve their first drafts and the final drafts that often show few signs that they even read the teacher comments? Are writing instructors neglecting to address a pedagogic stage between getting the first draft handed back from the instructor and then revising the first draft into a final product? Perhaps a required conversation to discuss the feedback could be held in the days immediately after a student gets back a rough draft. Students could explain why they used a certain word, for instance, in case the instructor was confused by word choice. Instructors could clarify their written comments so students do not misinterpret them. The

dialogues could be face-to-face, over the telephone, or even via electronic mail to make them convenient and conducive to individual communication and learning styles.

The instructor-learner interaction also takes on political implications. Mohr (1984) noted some students fear losing control of their writing when they are told to revise first drafts. Other students consider revising stories a way to gain control over their writing. Straub and Lunsford (1995) expressed concern that certain types of teacher comments usurp control of student writing. However, most instructors feel obligated to provide comments on student writing because feedback can improve learning (McKeachie, 1999). The negotiations about feedback between instructors and students can become a struggle for control over the text, perhaps ending in a compromise between the two parties or an impasse that will require further communication. Considering the political and social implications of feedback, the instructor-learner interaction becomes more than a means to simply correct mistakes.

Finally, McLeod's (1987) call for writing researchers to develop a "theory of affect" remains largely unanswered. If writing instructors can help students understand how their emotional states influence their writing, including their use of teacher comments, some students may seek help for writing apprehension, for instance. Some students could benefit by simply becoming aware that writing apprehension is a recognized psychological construct, that many people are affected by it, and that they are not alone. Others could seek counseling for their apprehension or various forms of treatment, such as biofeedback or relaxation techniques. Since many studies have found a negative relationship between writing apprehension and self-confidence, reducing high levels of writing apprehension might have the beneficial side effect of increasing self-

efficacy beliefs in their writing abilities. As students become more self-confident and less anxious about writing, it is possible that they will see the value of writing toward achieving their various life goals, further increasing their motivation to write.

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